

## LETTEE XXXIV

ERZERUM, *Dec.*

1.

I LEFT Harta in a snowstorm without the caravan, and wherever the snow was well beaten got along at a good pace, passing on the right the fortress of Hassan-Kaleh, with several lines of fortifications and a town at its base, which, with the surrounding district, consumes, it is said, an amount of strong drink equal in value to its taxation. The adjacent Pasin Plain, watered by the Araxes, has suffered severely from the Kurds. A short time ago all its Christian villages were plundered, and at least 20 horses, 31 asses, 2282 sheep, and 750 head of cattle, nearly the whole pastoral wealth of the people, were carried off by these marauders, while the Moslem villages were exempt from their attacks. After winding among uninteresting hills crowned with forts, along valleys in which military posts occur at frequent intervals, and making a long ascent, the minarets and grim fortifications of the unhappy town of Erzerum loomed through the snow-mist; the city itself lying on a hill slope above a very extensive plain at a height of over 6000 feet. It was a solemn scene. The snow was deep and was still falling, the heavens were black, and swirls of mist driven

by a strong wind blotted out at times the  
surrounding  
mountains. A dead calm followed, and snow  
clouds hung  
suspended over the city.

My first impression of Erzerum was of  
earthworks of